

## THE HAPPY RELEASE

By George Munson

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His wife's kiss was still on his lips, the happy laughter of his child rang in his ears. He sat at the door of the cottage and looked about him.

Roger Latham was one of the most prosperous settlers in the western valley. He had gone there a dozen years before, had taken out a claim, had made the wilderness to blossom. Now he was a well-to-do man, and in a few years would be a rich one.

He was married to the sweetest woman in the world. His life was idyllic. He could wish for no better fortune.

Only he was totally ignorant of anything that had happened during those twelve years, except during the last two weeks. He had had to be told even his name, his wife's and the child's. And, though he had picked his way cautiously, so that they only thought his strangeness was the result of the buggy accident two weeks before, he found himself confronted with a past, long since forgotten.

In this part his name was Roger Latham, but everything else seemed different. He had left college five years. He was married to a society woman, and unhappily married. Often he had planned to leave and go west, letting her keep his father's fortune, which he had inherited. He had known that it was his money she had always coveted, not himself. Yet he had tried to live on with her, in the hope that some day they would come together.

He recalled the misery of those years, when life, for all his wealth, seemed hopeless. He had been on the point of throwing up everything and going to Oregon. And after that there was complete blankness.

He had awakened to feel Lucy's lips upon his own, to hear his child calling him. She told him that he

had been injured in a buggy accident. The doctor smiled at his lapse of memory and told him that it would come back to him. But the memory that had returned was that of some life long ago, in which he seemed another man.

During those two weeks of silent misery he studied everything minutely. He gathered that some similar shock must have robbed him of that first memory. It was a case of alternating memory. For twelve years he had been another man, except for



"I Want to See Mr. Latham."

the name only. He found that he adored Lucy, a simple mountain girl, who trusted him implicitly. He had been perfectly rational when he went out to the valley. Nobody had suspected that the Roger Latham of those days was not the Roger Latham who had always been.

With the sweetness of this new life about him, Latham asked nothing better than to live out the remainder of his years in those surroundings. The misery of the life in the east was fresh and painful. Nevertheless, what of Marian? How